



Network News

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Spotlight on Service-Learning Hill Day

On March 19 and 20, SEANet, in partnership with Learning in Deed, hosted Hill Day, a two-day event designed to build awareness and support for service-learning among policymakers and elected officials.

SEANet members were provided with a 1/2 day training session on effectively educating and informing policymakers about service-learning -- including a clear understanding of lobbying rules and regulations. After the training session, 15 state and local service-learning representatives conducted 38 visits with Congressional members, White House and U.S. Department of Education officials.

SEANet members who participated in Hill Day share their thoughts and experiences below.

Pat Kells, Kansas

Kansas is thrilled with the results of Hill Day. One example of why: Representative Dennis Moore has committed to visiting a service-learning class at Spring Hill High School on April 10. His wife and scheduler may join him! He will first visit with the class and then talk with all students at a brief assembly.

Heidi McGinley, Maine

Hill Day was extremely productive in a number of ways. Maine's delegation,

because it is so small (only four members), is constantly in touch with constituents, and not at all reluctant to contact the Department of Education for information. However, none of them had any current information about service-learning, and were really interested -- actually hungry for information. Once they understood the concept, they were very supportive.

I have made these visits before, and tend to forget between times how valuable they are. It is important to our system of government that people like us provide information to those who represent us. National decision making suffers when we don't provide clear objective information.

Carter Hendricks, Minnesota

Hill Day was a wonderful and educational opportunity to gain a better sense of how things operate in Washington D.C. I was able to meet with staff from both Senators' office and four representatives' offices. I even spoke directly with Senator Wellstone and Representative Sabo.

Since Hill Day, I have had communication with several of the staff that I met. In fact, Senator Wellstone's office is considering writing an op-ed for National Youth Service Day expressing support for service-learning.

Wade Brynson, California

I met with Tanya Clay, Legislative Assistant to Senator Barbara Boxer, and was pleased to have an opportunity to explain how service-learning improves teaching and learning while making school more relevant for students. In meetings with Denise Forte, Legislative Assistant to Congressman George Miller, and Erin Coyle Strawn,

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Appropriations Associate for Congressman Randy “Duke” Cunningham, I brought attention to local service-learning activities in their respective districts.

Congressman Miller not only participates in service-learning recognition activities in the Mount Diablo Unified School District, Concord, California, he is also a frequent classroom volunteer in the civics classes at Olympic Continuation High School.

Congressman Cunningham is currently involved with service-learning recognition ceremonies in Encinitas Elementary School District, (San Diego County) where his wife Nancy is the Coordinator of the CalServe partnership.

For more information on Hill Day, including materials from the event, please visit:
<http://www.learningindeed.org/policy/hillday.html>

AYPF Forum on Future of Service-Learning in Education Reform

By Sarah Walsh

On March 14, American Youth Policy Forum held a roundtable discussion on initiatives to integrate service-learning into national and local policies and practice. Present on the panel were Shelley H. Billig, Vice President and Researcher at RMC Research Corporation; Kenneth Holdsman, Service-Learning Director of the School District of Philadelphia; John Kounas, Legislative Fellow (and former high school teacher) in the Office of Senator Charles E. Grassley (R-IA); and Jane Oates, Legislative Assistant in the Office of Senator Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA).

Both Billig and Oates emphasized the need for more research on the efficacy and prevalence of service-learning, particularly in connection with standards and high-stakes testing. They also suggested that the Corporation for National Service play a more active role in establishing the visibility and credibility of service-learning. In addition, both Billig and Oates stressed that service-learning should not be moved to the U.S. Department of Education, where service-learning programs would be block granted and would have to compete with other education programs for funding. The focus on including service-learning in national legislation might also be lost.

Kounas and Oates underscored the importance of support from teachers, parents, and students as crucial in gaining support from policymakers. They noted that constituent correspondence and class letters are very effective in attracting the attention of members of Congress who sit on the reauthorizing and appropriating committees. All the panelists acknowledged the need for service-learning language to be included in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in order for more practitioners to consider service-learning as a teaching strategy.

Holdsman also noted that in Pennsylvania, service-learning language is included in many of the state’s RFPs. For example, service-learning is considered a preventative measure for safe schools, and has allowed the School District of Philadelphia to receive \$450,000 for the training and recruitment of service-learning professional and community partners. At the local level, Billig suggested that service-learning must be included as part of the district budget to increase sustainability.

Important Upcoming Dates

May 16-18, 2001
2001 Next Steps National Symposium: *Policy and Leadership for Service-Learning*
San Diego, CA

June 22-24, 2001
National Service-Learning Leader Schools Leadership Institute
Washington, DC

August 1, 2001
Progress Report Due for January 1 – July 30

September 19-21, 2001
CNS Learn & Serve America Grantee Meeting
Washington, DC

September 30, 2001
2002 National Service Learning Conference Application to Present Due

CNS Testifies in Support of 2002 Budget

On Wednesday, April 25th, representatives of the Corporation for National Service appeared before the Senate Subcommittee on VA, HUD, and Independent Agencies Appropriations in support of the President’s Fiscal Year 2002 request for the agency and its programs. In attendance were Chairman Kit Bond (R-MO), Ranking Democrat Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), and Senator Tim Johnson (D-SD). Appearing for CNS was acting Chief Executive Officer Wendy Zenker.

In her opening statement, Zenker said that the President’s budget affirms the nation’s commitment to volunteerism. The \$411 million in the President’s budget, she said, was sufficient to maintain current services and start two new initiatives. Zenker said the budget reduction reflected in the President’s documents reflected reduced needs for

funds in the National Service Trust. She also noted that the Corporation had received a clean opinion on its FY 2000 audit, and is in the process of developing an integrated grants management program.

sensitive to the needs of CNS and vigilant in the agency's operations. He also said that while he, as a new member of the education authorizing committee, was also concerned with reading initiatives, he was most concerned with

Senator Mikulski asked how national service will participate with education and other programs to narrow the digital divide, an effort to which she designated resources last year. She also voiced concerns about integrating faith-based organizations into the work of CNS.

**Special Pre-Conference Workshop:
Telling Your Story to Education Leaders and Policy Makers**

All delegates to the National Service-Learning Leader Schools Leadership Institute are invited to participate in a special optional pre-conference workshop. The skill-building workshop will enhance your knowledge and skills to effectively tell your Leader School's story to local, state, and national policy makers and education leaders. This special professional development session will provide training in techniques for effectively educating and informing community members, education leaders, the media, and policy makers about service-learning and your school's program. You will be given tools to help community and education leader such as school board members, legislators, and others become more aware of the benefits of service-learning in your community and in the nation.

One of the goals of the Leader Schools initiative is to expand the use of quality service-learning throughout the country. Building awareness and understanding about the impact of service-learning among policy makers at all levels is a critical element of this goal.

Participants in the session will receive materials to assist them in telling their story such as a synthesis of some of the current supporting research for service-learning, a format for writing more effectively about their school, and guidelines for informing policy makers. The agenda will include:

- Policy 101 – Who makes policy impacting service-learning?
- Ins and Outs of Meeting with Policy Makers - panel discussion with education association representatives and legislative staff
- Do's and Don'ts of Policy Maker Education - Understanding the restrictions as a recipient of federal funds
- Media Training -How to tell your story to the local press and the community

This pre-Institute session will be held on Friday, June 22 from 1:00- 4:00 at Hyatt Regency Washington (the site of the Institute). To register for this unique opportunity, complete the enclosed form and fax it to ESI. There is no charge for the pre-conference. Space is limited, so please register by May 23, 2001 to reserve your space(s).

Note: registrants should arrange their travel to arrive in time for this workshop. Any costs for arriving the day prior will be the responsibility of the participant, not the pre-conference organizers or the Leader Schools program.

This pre-institute session is co-sponsored by Learning In Deed, the Compact for Learning and Citizenship, and the State Education Agency K-12 Service-Learning Network (SEANet).

Chairman Bond commended the Corporation for “turning the corner” on long-standing management problems, and put in a plea for a new CEO and CFO

results. He indicated that he is planning to introduce legislation to access CNS resources to assist in youth-to-youth mentoring activities.

However, Mikulski said that “as long as we avoid mission creeping over to evangelism, we will be okay.”

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Upcoming Listserv Postings

These documents will also be posted on the SEANet website at www.seanetonline.org.

2001 Spring Meeting Notes:

SEANet members from 22 states met on April 4th in Denver at the National Service Learning Conference. SEANet members developed a policy agenda, paying particular attention to the role of

the Corporation for National Service in the new Bush administration. SEANet committees reported on current work and developed plans for future activities. Finally, the SEANet membership fee proposal and the preliminary proposal for a K-12 Service-Learning Leadership Organization were discussed and considered. The complete notes from the meeting will be posted on the SEANet listserv shortly.

SEANet ESEA Paper:

SEANet has developed a resource document identifying areas of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as modified by the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994, that encourage the use of service-learning. The document focuses specifically on provisions in Title I, Title IV, and Title X. The paper also provides examples of practices connecting ESEA to service-learning.
